

February 24, 2017



## **RABIES ALERT**

***Indiantown dog tests positive for rabies***

### **Contact:**

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**Martin County, FL** – The Florida Department of Health in Martin County has issued a rabies alert for Indiantown following a domestic dog testing positive for rabies. According to the owner, the dog was unvaccinated and kept outside. It became sick after it was scratched or bitten by an unknown animal.

This rabies alert will remain in effect for 60 days. It is the first confirmed case of rabies in an animal in Martin County this year.

All residents and visitors in Martin County should be aware that rabies is present in the wild animal population and domestic animals are at risk if not vaccinated. The public is asked to maintain a heightened awareness that rabies is active in Martin County. Alerts are designed to increase awareness to the public, but they should not get a false sense of security to areas that have not been named as under an alert.

An animal with rabies could infect other wild or domestic animals that have not been vaccinated against rabies. All domestic animals should be vaccinated against rabies and all wildlife contact should be avoided, particularly raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats and coyotes.

Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is fatal to warm blooded animals and humans. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment started soon after the exposure, will protect an exposed person from the disease.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions:

- Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets.
- Keep your pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Martin County Animal Control at 772-463-3211.
- Call your local animal control agency to remove any stray animals from your neighborhood.

- Do not handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children **never** to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas, where they might come in contact with people and pets.
- Persons who have been bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals should seek medical attention and report the injury to the Florida Department of Health in Martin County at 772-221-4000.

For further information on rabies, go to <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html>

#### **About the Florida Department of Health**

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